

LONDON REVIEW PANEL

Project Director
Liliesleaf Trust UK
Centre of Memory and Learning- 28 Penton Street

August 2022

Dear [REDACTED]

London Review Panel: Centre of Memory and Learning- 28 Penton Street, London Borough of Islington

Please find enclosed the London Review Panel report following the design review of the Centre of Memory and Learning- 28 Penton Street on the 27th of July 2022. I would like to thank you for your participation in the review and offer ongoing Mayor's Design Advocate support as the scheme's design develops.

Yours sincerely,

Mayor's Design Advocate

cc.

All meeting attendees

Jules Pipe, Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills

Philip Graham, Executive Director of Good Growth, GLA

Louise Duggan, Head of Regeneration, GLA

LONDON

REVIEW PANEL

Report of London Review Panel meeting for Centre of Memory and Learning - 28 Penton Street

Wednesday 27th July 2022

A site visit took place ahead of the review with a tour and briefings given by the client team and the Design Team.

London Review Panel

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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MDA (Chair)
MDA
MDA

Attendees

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
The Liliesleaf Trust UK
The Liliesleaf Trust UK
Al-Jawad Pike
Al-Jawad Pike
Cragg Management
GLA Regeneration
GLA Regeneration
GLA Regeneration

Report copied to

Jules Pipe Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and Skills
Philip Graham GLA Executive Director of Good Growth
Louise Duggan GLA Head of Regeneration

Confidentiality and publication

Please note that while schemes not yet in the public domain, for example at a pre-application stage, will be treated as confidential, as a public organisation the GLA is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) and in the case of an FOI request may be obliged to release project information submitted for review. Review reports will target publication to the London Review Panel webpage six months following the review unless otherwise agreed.

The Liliesleaf Trust introduction

Representatives from the Liliesleaf Trust set out the context for the project and created a powerful link between the history of the building – as the nerve centre of Anti-Apartheid resistance lead by key members of the exiled African National Congress, and the future vision to create a Centre of Memory and Learning,

London Review Panel's Views

Summary

The panel commend the team on their ambition for this project which includes plenty of exciting opportunities and challenges. The panel are encouraged that this team are committed to delivering a cultural hub that will educate and engage a variety of users. The panel can see the team are committed to introducing many different overlapping programmes to achieve rich and meaningful outcomes for this community. The panel see there are many positive proposals to build on. The panel understand this is an important project for LB Islington and needs to be delivered successfully.

The project needs to better link activities The Liliesleaf Trust UK (LTUK) undertake to the design and programming of the building. The project should be more clearly presented with the wider context of its surroundings. The team need to demonstrate the projects interaction more clearly with its immediate context on Penton Street and on White Lion Street. The project should explore the potential of the entrance on White Lion Street further. This entrance could improve the connections between neighbourhood and building and offer a more welcoming arrival space. The entrance on Penton Street can remain an additional entrance point and can help control access into the building.

The project should allow for a flexible layout to adapt to a wide range of activities and commercial outputs in the building. The project should better integrate into the wider urban fabric of Islington. The building should maintain and uphold its legacy by continuing to be a community resource.

1. Public welcome and arrival experience

The panel recommend the team carefully consider the context and boundaries of the street front

- The interactions between the building and both Penton Street and White Lion Street should be further developed
- Trees, street furniture, and pavement along front and back entrances should be better considered
- The panel recommend that the project team speak to highways team to try to blur the boundary between street and building.

The panel encourage the team to further discuss the titling of the building to better capture the objectives of the space and its programming

- The team should consider the current title of the building “Anti-Apartheid Legacy,” ensuring that the title captures the focus and range of activity in the building.

The panel recommend the team carefully consider the frontage of the building and how it reads between neighbouring buildings

- The team should consider the commercial grain of the building and how the façades and footprints of 28 Penton Street match its neighbouring buildings. The potential of the façade to read as a cultural space as opposed to a shop front should to be developed.
- Particular attention should be paid to the tension between 28 Penton Street, the neighbouring real estate agency and the neighbouring pizza place. How the building sits and reads next to its neighbours needs to be better understood.
- South African patterning could be incorporated into the historic façade to draw in heritage – this could potentially be a commission to work with a diasporic artist.
- The façade could exhibit the programming of events that take place in the building.

The panel recommend that the project team further test both entrances to the building, particularly exploring the potential of the White Lion Street entrance

- The panel agree that the building's entrance on White Lion Street entrance is a celebratory urban space.
- The back entrance provides a space where visitors can test the space and can decide if they would like to come inside the building.
- Barriers to exclusion in the built environment are often a single step crossing a threshold. The gate on White Lion currently reads as defensive, the panel suggest setting the gate back or redesigning it.
- The panel suggest that the White Lion entrance is where the project team can prioritize urban potential. This entrance can help create a clear welcome and help the building become a clear part of the city.

2. Programming, flexibility, and spatial arrangement

The panel recommend co-creation of content and storytelling to draw in members of the community into the development of the space

- The panel recommend the project team works with Afrocentric/black-led organisations to embed the project with their values and design goals. Programming can be shaped by the local communities LTUK are already in conversation with. There is potential to have a core group that the project team can work with to programme the space. The project team can draw in community members lived experience to shape content.
- The panel agree that civic participation is a useful key to the urban and social identity of this project.
- The panel recommends that the project team incorporate the graphics/activities of resistance into the co-development of project proposals. This includes the branding and design work LTUK has done with London Metropolitan University, which can be incorporated into the project proposals.
- The panel urge the project team to take time to carefully and meaningfully develop the buildings cultural references and atmosphere.

The panel recommend maintaining a flexible layout to maximize potential and commercial output of the space

- The NLHF scheme see the building's back space as a point of education for children, which may cause tension if it also a significant point of entry into the building. The panel suggest that there is space on upper floors of the building where safeguarding of children could happen. Current proposals/layouts raised concerns about heritage funding application due to the tension between public access and security lines for children.
- The panel highlight the tight spaces within the current layout of the ground floor. The panel emphasize that as commercial output is key to this building, the project team should explore taking out the reception desk and having someone greet visitors in a more personal way, as point of sale and reception have changed fundamentally during COVID.
- The panel recommend that the project team divide the buildings spaces less into exhibition, gift shop, reception, etc. and maintain a more flexible approach to the building's spaces. The panel recommend that the first floor feels more like a living room and agree that the proposed level of domesticity retained in the plans is excellent.

The panel recommend the building has food and beverage offerings and that the infrastructure needed for this offer can be flexible

- The project team can explore having pop up stalls for food and beverage in the garden
- The centre storage unit can have dual functionality in order to maintain flexibility of the first floor.
- The panel agree that a food and beverage offering, even if small, is fundamental to the visitor experience for access and comfort needs.

3. Architectural expression

The panel recommend that the legacy and history of the building is upheld

- The panel recognize the importance of this project and the legacy it is sharing with London.
- The panel agree that the identity of the people as well as the building need to be recognized and brought together.
- The panel recognize the importance of the history of the building and emphasize that the building needs to live on through this new project. The panel urge the project team to not de-monumentalise or museum-ise the building and its functions.
- There is a story of migration and people coming to London for refuge and advocating for what is going on in their home country that needs to be carried on in this building. This is a shared theme that permeates with the wider Islington community.

4. Project risk and phasing options

The panel advise the team to draw in different sources of funding

- The panel recommend speaking to people have delivered similar projects and have accessed various sources of funding in the process.

- The panel recommend phasing the project. The panel suggest the team consider the minimum the building can deliver to be operational (to drive further funding) and maximize the budget.
- The panel advise explore the potential of releasing the first and second floors and then taking up the upper floors.
- The panel recommend reiterating and broadcasting the strong starting point of narrative the project team began with in bids, highlighting the building's importance as a community resource, and when applying for new sources of funding.

Next Steps

The panel would welcome the opportunity to further comment on this exciting and aspirational scheme at a future appropriate stage in the project development.